

From: Joseph Frank [josephm_frank@yahoo.com]
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To: COM SBCC Home
Subject: Residential Fire Sprinklers

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I am writing to express my concerns on the topic of making residential sprinklers systems mandatory in the residential building code. I have worked extensively with these systems and to date they have caused far more damage then they have prevented. I have heard and witnessed story after story of accidental discharge...freezing pipes, kids throwing balls in the house, moving furiture around, etc. These accidental discharges are devastating to the families for something that is almost unavoidable, because without proper maintenance it is not a matter of if the system will fail it is a matter of when and with our temperature swings here in Spokane, WA it is more likely sooner rather than later.

With that little background here are my reason against residential sprinklers:

1. Cost: I know everyone says this one but it is not only the cost of the initial installation it is the cost of the maintenance on this kind of system. Maintenance is such a big deal that in most current applications it is a requirement to have these systems tested on a annual basis. Obviously just due to shear numbers this type of annual inspection would be unrealistic in a residential situation.
2. Fire Protection: If we are really trying to protect our homes against fire why don't we spend this time and effort going after vinyl siding? Requiring a fiber cement siding product would greatly reduce house fires. I have personally witness two huge car fires directly next to a residence with fiber cement siding, where all the siding did was glow. The fire basically melted the garage door to the ground yet there was absolutely no structural damage to the building and the fire was prevented from spreading due to fiber cement siding. On the other hand I have seen a burning fence post fall against a vinyl house and within 5 minutes 3/4s of the structure was destroyed, and in this case sprinklers would have been useless since it was burning from the outside in.
3. Reality: In reality if there is no inspection to ensure these systems remain active people will turn the system off. They will be going away on vacation or just be overwhelmed with the concern of water damage that they will make the system inoperable. so in the end all we did is make homes less affordable and do little towards the cause of reducing house fires.

In the end lets spend our time and money making better homes that are less suseptable to fire threats rather than go after something that does not even address the root cause of the fire.

sincerely,

Joe Frank